Comments received for
ISO 639-3 Change Request
2019-004

Outcome: Rejected
Effective date: January 23, 2020
Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2019-004: to create the code element [pmg] for Pomakish.

The request to create the code [pmg] for Pomakish is rejected. The change request states that “Pomak, Macedonian Slavs and standardised Bulgarian speaking people can understand each other to a large extent”; therefore the main criterion for granting separate codes, namely, that the speech varieties should be so different as not to be intelligible, is not met. One of the arguments given is that in the same way that Serbians, Bosnians and Croatians have separate language codes in spite of intelligibility between them, so should Pomakish.

However, the standard defines another criterion which is the basis for those three languages receiving separate codes: “Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, the existence of long-standing distinctly named ethnolinguistic identities coupled with well-developed standardization and literature that are distinct can be treated as an indicator that they should nevertheless be considered to be different languages.” Thus a successful request to create a code for Pomakish would need to demonstrate that there is well-developed standardization that has resulted in a significant body of literature. The standardization efforts described in the change request sound preliminary and the list of literature provided identifies only two books written in Pomakish and they are in a second language as well.